Springfield Township High School

**Graduation Project Annotated Bibliography**

**Student Name:**

**Annotation # 6**

**MLA Citation:**

"Mass transportation." *The Gale Encyclopedia of Science*. Ed. K. Lee Lerner and Brenda Wilmoth Lerner. 4th ed. Detroit: Gale, 2008. *Gale Student Resources In Context*. Web. 1 Mar. 2011.

**INFORMATION:**

Scope and purpose of the work:

The purpose of the article is to give readers a general background on mass transit and the different approaches to it. The article dives into several different means of transportation, explaining the pros and cons of each. The article also talks about the pros and cons of mass transit in general.

Intended Audience:

The intended audience of this article is lay people who are unfamiliar with the topic of mass transportation. The article serves as a general background source, which provides information that can be easily understood by most audiences.

**SUMMARY**

Thesis or main idea:

“During the twentieth century, however, the role of mass transit systems in developed nations such as the United States has declined dramatically. The primary means of transportation has become the private automobile, which typically carries only one or two passengers at a time.” (“Mass Transportation 1”

Summary of main arguments:

The article provides arguments both for and against mass transit. For the pro side of this debate, the article argues that mass transit can carry more people, take up less space, run efficiently, and are more environmentally friendly. However, mass transit is also cited as being expensive, not convenient, and only work well when money is put into the systems. Without proper infrastructure, the article argues, mass transit falls below the transit rider’s expectations.

**EVIDENCE**

Summary of evidence:

* Basic info
  + Mass transportation allows large numbers of people to be transported on a single or a combination of vehicles
  + Airplanes, railways, busses, trolleys, light rail systems, and subways
  + Mass transit=Mass transportation
  + Appeals to people who are unable to buy cars and live in urban environments
  + US transportation is focused around private automobile—only carries one or two passengers at a time
* Advantages
  + More efficient way to move people
  + “A subway system operation on two tracks 36 feet wide can transport 80,000 passengers per hour. In comparison, an eight-lane freeway 125 feet wide can carry only 20,000 passengers per hour” (“Mass Transportation” 1-2)
  + Bus lines are much cheaper than personal car transport
    - 2 cents per vehicle mile compared to 10 times that for cars
  + Take up less space than roads to
  + More environmentally friendly than automobiles
    - “The amount of air pollution produced per passenger, therefore, is much less.” (“Mass Transportation” 2)
* Disadvantages
  + “Systems are economically feasible only in areas that have relatively large populations.” (“Mass Transportation” 2)
  + As population decreases so does the efficiency of mass transportation systems
  + Expensive to build and operate
    - “This factor becomes more important when cities decide to install mass transit systems long after development has already taken place and disruption of existing structures is a serious problem.” (“Mass Transportation” 2)
  + Without proper funding, mass transit can be “crowded, uncomfortable, dirty, and unreliable.” (“Mass Transportation” 2)
  + “not as convenient as the automobile.” (“Mass Transportation” 2)
* Historical trends
  + Following WWII prosperity in America rose and more people had the ability to buy cars
    - Lead to a decrease use of public transportation
    - 1950-1970🡪19.5 billion to 6.7 billion
  + Oil crisis of the early 70s lead to a revitalization in use of mass transit
    - Once it ended less money was given
    - “Amtrak proved successful among intercity passengers, but the federal government has never maintained the consistent support of the system it showed during the aftermath of the OPEC crisis.” (“Mass Transportation” 3)

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation of research:

The article uses lots of research that helps support the topic. The article uses historical data and historical events to help support topics such as American fuel use. Historical data is also seen by the citation of statistics following WWII, and the resulting decline in American use of public transportation.

Evaluation of scope:

The article has a focused scope in ideas relating to mass transit. Because the article evaluates pros and cons of mass transit the reader gets a good overall sense of what mass transit is like and why the US has been slow to adopt technologies and systems that provide better transportation. By analyzing the economic benefits and costs of mass transit systems the article does a good job at really showing how mass transit systems cannot come out of nowhere and are often difficult to build and maintain.

Evaluation of author bias:

This article is not biased. It presents arguments both for and against mass transit.

**REFLECTION:**

This source is going to be helpful for providing good background information about mass transportation. It will be important to give a good overview of what mass transportation is and how it is successful regardless of which system is being used. Making sure I have a good understanding of what mass transportation is will help me get a good sense of how SEPTA works, and how the different systems work together to provide transportation for South-Eastern Pennsylvania. I am not sure that this article is going to provide me with a lot of specific details, but for general background this article covers most topics pretty well. Going forward I need to get more specific sources that focus specifically on rail transportation.